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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/683,417	12/24/2001	Denis J. Stemmler	F-428	2989
919	7590	01/24/2006	EXAMINER	
PITNEY BOWES INC. 35 WATERVIEW DRIVE P.O. BOX 3000 MSC 26-22 SHELTON, CT 06484-8000			MILLER, WILLIAM L	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3677	
DATE MAILED: 01/24/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/683,417

Applicant(s)

STEMMLE, DENIS J.

Examiner

William L. Miller

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 November 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 26,27 and 34-39 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 26,27 and 34-39 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 24 December 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Amendment***

1. The amendment filed 11-10-2005 has been entered. Claims 26, 27, and 34-39 are pending.

### ***Drawings***

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the door (claims 26 and 34), communications device (claims 27 and 37), and reflective shielding (claim 35) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

***Claim Objections***

3. Claim 36 is objected to because of the following informalities: the “user” cannot be positively claimed. The following amendment would overcome the above informality: cancel claim 36, and in claim 27, line 3, after “user” insert --located inside a home--. Appropriate correction is required.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. Claims 26, 34, 38, and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Webb (US#2004/0020978).

5. Regarding claim 26, Webb discloses a mailbox 10 for decontaminating mail comprising: a door 12 for allowing access to the interior of the mailbox; a decontamination system 20 operatively connected to a controller 30 for decontaminating mail; and at least one divider 28 for separating mail; and a keyed start switch 34 used to send a decontamination start signal to the decontamination system. The examiner notes a physical key is not being positively claimed, and the keyed start switch is capable of receiving a physical key.

6. Regarding claim 34, Webb discloses a decontaminating device including a decontaminating chamber 10 comprising: a door 12 for allowing access to the interior of the chamber; a decontamination system 20 operatively connected to a controller 30 for decontaminating mail; at least one divider 28 for separating mail; and a keyed start switch 34 used to send a decontamination start signal to the decontamination system. The examiner notes a

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physical key is not being positively claimed, and the keyed start switch is capable of receiving a physical key.

7. Regarding claims 38 and 39, the decontamination system includes a UV source, and the divider is least partially transparent to UV radiation at least via its slotted configuration allowing the UV radiation to pass therebetween.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 27, 36, and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Beckert (US#6948653).

10. Although Webb discloses a communications device, namely lamps 40,42,44, for providing status information to a user adjacent the mailbox, Webb fails to disclose a communications device for providing status information to a remote user (such as inside a home) via a wireless network communications channel. However, wireless transmission of status information to a remote user is well known in the mailbox art. Beckert discloses in col. 6, lines 56-65, both a visual status display 137 for a user adjacent the mailbox 130, and a wireless network communication channel (transmitter/receiver) 139 providing status information to a remote user. Therefore, as taught by Beckert, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Webb by including a communications

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device for providing status information to a remote user (such as inside a home) via a wireless network communications channel thereby enhancing the operating efficiency of the mailbox.

11. Claim 35 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Cunningham (US#3346270).

12. Regarding claim 35, Webb fails to disclose reflective shielding as claimed. Cunningham discloses a mailbox 130 wherein its inner surfaces are coated with a reflective coating (shielding) to prevent UV radiation from escaping and to enhance sterilization (col. 2, lines 54-58). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Webb by including a reflective coating (shielding) on the inner surfaces of the mailbox to prevent UV radiation from escaping and to enhance sterilization.

#### ***Response to Arguments***

1. The applicant presents a general allegation that the limitation of “a keyed start switch for receiving a physical key that is engaged and thereby used to send a decontamination start signal to the decontamination system” overcomes the Webb reference. It is first noted a physical key is not being positively claimed. The start switch 34 disclosed by Webb is being viewed as a “keyed” start switch as it a start switch which requires manual manipulation (being viewed as “keying”) by the user to activate, just as a keypad or keyboard requires manual manipulation, or “keying”, to operate. Further, the keyed start switch of Webb is capable of receiving (or being engaged by) a physical key.

*Conclusion*

13. Applicant's amendment necessitated any new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

14. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See PTO-892.

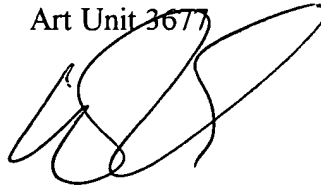
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William L. Miller whose telephone number is (571) 272-7068. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, J. J. Swann can be reached on (571) 272-7075. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

William L. Miller  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3677

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'WLM', written over the printed name and title of the examiner.

WLM